

361 /10/ The appearance of the villages indicates that their inhabitants feel safe. There are none of those hut clusters bunched together in
[171] narrow walled-in areas to withstand the invasions of an El-hadj-Omar or of a Samory, as in Bambara country; none of those family groupings of flat-roofed huts, those strongholds sheltering the whole family from the grandfather to the last of his grandchildren to resist through sheer numbers the incursions of a more powerful neighbor, as in Gourounsi
[542] country where the authority of chiefs is so weak. Here every family head, that is, a man with his wives, his unmarried children, and his servants, occupies a certain number of huts that together form his yri, a grouping Europeans call by its Bambara name, soukala.

342 The huts are circular and usually built of mud, but sometimes of
333 stakes driven into the ground and surrounded with sekô, a kind of mat of plaited broad straw. The huts are surmounted with a roof, likewise of straw, resting on a wooden framework. When a native wishes to build a hut, he sets a date with a mason expert in laying mud bricks and notifies the village people. On the appointed day everyone comes to him. The women fetch water from the stream; the men excavate the soil a few meters from where the hut is to be erected; the children trample the mortar and carry to the mason the clods prepared by the old men who sit gravely around the mud pile. This is a festive occasion for the village, because the man who builds must supply drink for all, and food as well if he wishes to do things properly.

A circle is traced on the ground to indicate the outline of the hut, and the mason places the mud clods obliquely side by side along the circle. When the first round is finished, he starts another, and he proceeds in this fashion to mid-height. The work is then interrupted until the following day to give the first part a chance to dry. This is why several huts are usually built at the same time. No opening is left in the wall. When it is dry, a door is cut through, usually arched and so low that one must creep on hands and knees in order to get in. Well-to-do women close their hut with a wooden door that opens inward; it is equipped with a wooden latch that works
[414] by means of a large key made of a stick with small iron rods perpendicularly attached to it. The children and even the husband usually leave their clothing, their luxury items, and their cowries in these closed huts which are better protected against thieves. Those who cannot afford this luxury of a door drive two stakes into the ground, one on each side of the opening, and slip a mat between the stakes and the wall.

FIRST BOOK

Chapter 1

The Origins of the Mossi

174 Most of the people who have dealt with the history of the Mossi have said that they come from the southeast, from the region of Gambakha or Gambaga (Dagomba). From there they are said to have occupied successively, going toward the north, the regions of Fada-N'Gourma, Ouagadougou, and Ouahigouya.

But before that where did they come from?

Captain Lambert, who commanded the circle of Ouagadougou in 1906-07, has tried to find an answer to this question in his study of the Mossi country, published in the Bulletin de la Société de Géographie de l'Afrique Occidentale française /Bulletin of the Geographic Society of French West Africa/, 1908.

174 "South of Bornu," he writes (op. cit. No. 7, page 166), "in the German Cameroons, people still exist who are known as Mossah and who, according to local tradition, were once master of the whole country. At present they are confined to a rather restricted area (the valley of Logone-Cameroons).

171 "The Mossah today bear such a striking physical resemblance to the Mossi that one could not have lived among them without recognizing the similarities; the tattooing is identical except for the circumflex accent which has been more recently acquired, as we shall demonstrate. The physical resemblance is almost total, and, besides, the Mossah have the same social organization as the Mossi, with all its characteristic hierarchy. In brief, /2/ there is no doubt as to the common origin of the two groups, and we can be certain that the presence of the Mossah in one part of Bornu and their traditional supremacy in the country in bygone days establish with certainty the habitat where the people we are dealing with must have been formed and developed. All this, of course, occurred during a period long before the events that allowed the Arab chroniclers to reveal their existence to us." (1)

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1. Actually, these "Arab chroniclers" is simply Es-Sadi, the author of Tarikh-es-Soudan /History of Sudan/, who wrote as late as the seventeenth century. As a matter of fact, it was the Portuguese writer, the great historian and geographer, Jean de Barros, author of l'Asia (1552-53), who was the first to reveal the existence of the Mossi in the sixteenth century.

Léon, the African, did not know of them, nor did the Arab geographers and historians of the Middle Ages. Let us add that one should verify exactly in the area whether the Mossah resemble the Mossi other than by name. The matter has become relatively easy since the French occupation of the Cameroons.

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Captain Lambert adds in a note:

"A new question arises here: can one consider the Mossi as being autochthonous to Bornu, or should their long stay in that region be considered as a step in the great migratory movement that, in successive phases, has brought them to the heart of the Niger estuary?

"In the present state of our knowledge, it would be unwise to take a firm position. We shall merely show that the feudal system that characterizes the political constitution of the Mossi can be compared to the system prevalent in Abyssinia. The hierarchical set-up seems to be identical in certain respects; leaders are appointed under analogous conditions, and the election of the Negus is accompanied by a period of anarchy which we also find here and which seems to go back to ancient traditions.

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"It may well be that this goes beyond pure coincidence. While we were in the process of editing a small dictionary of the Mossi language, we took the trouble to find out whether the dialects spoken in Abyssinia were likely to give us some clues on this point. We must admit, however, that the vocabularies of the Galla, Ahmaris /sic/, and Tigré languages that we consulted have not provided us /3/ with convincing arguments. But it is a proven fact today that, from the

174 viewpoint of ethnographic research, text similarities do not mean
 197 very much, and idioms that are not fixed by writing may, within a
 few centuries, become deformed to the extent of being unrecognizable.
 While the value of grammatical comparisons is much more important,
 we have unfortunately had neither the time nor the means to make
 use of this method. We will, therefore, merely indicate this point
 of view which, in our opinion, could lead to fruitful observations. On
 174 the other hand, missionaries have claimed that the Mossi traditionally
 would have preserved the symbolic notion of the Christian cross, a
 fact we have been unable to verify and which, without being im-
 possible a priori, seems unlikely."

After this parenthesis about the distant origins of the Mossi,
 Captain Lambert continues:

"It is indeed highly probable, and here again, lacking written
 documents, we have only oral traditions to base our opinions on, that
 the Mossi people, split up by the impact of a Moslem invasion from
 the east, must have, through successive waves and losing ground in
 the opposite direction, spread further toward the west, so that the
 Mossi-bé (1), who still form several agglomerations in the western

1. Mossi-bé is simply the plural of the word
 Mossi in Peuhle /Peul/ language.

part of Sokoto and even in the Dounzou circle and who also show
 striking analogies with the Mossi proper, can also be used as a ref-
 erence. (Captain Lambert adds in a note: "Among the Mossi-bé we
 304 find the circumflex accent which would complete the ethnic tatooing
 171 of the Mossi as it is today. This mark rightly belongs to the natives
 171 of the left bank of the Niger river up to the angle formed by the
 Dollol-Maouri.") These agglomerations indicate, in a very approx-
 imate fashion, the location of the Mossi empire at the historical
 period that evidently marks its apogee of power; toward 1350, as
 we saw /4/ in the Tarikh, Timbuktu was conquered by the sultan of
 Mossi."

174 The incident to which Captain Lambert refers here is the con-
 114 quest of Timbuktu by the Mossi (in 1333 exactly, according to the
 most advanced calculations) (1), which is mentioned by Es-Sadi in

174 Yemen. But the indication that this country is presently inhabited by the Songhay /sic/ certainly points to Djerma or Zaberma, slightly east of the Niger River in the Say and Dosso region. By dissociating the Moslem legend (undoubtedly created by some Yarse Moslem of the Mossi) from the rest of the tale, one still comes back to the temporary and distant occupation of Djerma by the ancestors of the Mossi.

174 Delafosse, on the other hand, contrary to Dr. Ruelle, Captain Lambert, and Lieutenant Marc, although, like the others, he has the Mossi come from Dagomba to their present habitat (see Haut-Sénégal-Niger /Upper Senegal and Niger/, Vol. I, pp. 305-310), seems disinclined to accept the idea of an eastern origin. He says (page 310, in a note), "Lieutenant Marc seems to want to attribute an eastern origin to the Mossi. To strengthen his hypothesis, he says that the organization of the court of the Morho nâba (emperors of the Mossi) is unique in western Africa, while there are /11/ equivalents in 644 Haoussa, Bornu, etc. I should like to point out that this argument is 114 of little value, precisely because, contrary to Lieutenant Marc's theory, one finds in all ancient states of western Africa (Ghana, Mali, Tekrou, Gao, Dahomey, Benin, etc.) an organization absolutely analogous to that of the Mossi court (see part IV of this work and compare with the reports of Arab geographers and early European travelers)." Of course I agree with Delafosse in not finding Lieutenant Marc's argument very penetrating (1), but Ruelle, Lambert, and

1. Here is the argument as developed by Lieutenant Marc (op. cit., p. 134, 135):

"The feudal organization of the Mossi country, the court of the Moro-Naba, its pages, and its eunuchs, are all unique in western Africa. On the other hand, the black monarchs, as they are known in central Africa, seem to live in a setting that greatly resembles the one in which the Moro-Naba lives. The sultans of Zinder, Bornu, and Wadai have also a court, eunuchs, and pages. The little we know about the organization of their empires seems rather similar to what we have seen among the Mossi. But our

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documentation on this matter is not extensive enough to enable us to attempt a comparative study."

Marc do not base themselves exclusively on this argument. They also use a tradition of the Mossi themselves, and it would doubtless be unwise to reject it without examining it further. An argument that could be cited in favor of a very ancient occupation of Djerma by the ancestors of the Mossi is Binger's following remark: "The Mossi must have remained in contact with the Touareg /Tuareg/ for a fairly long time (2) ... since they partially adopted their dress and use, as they do, the *cauteh-handled* [*poignée en croix*] *saber*."

2. In this quotation, I have omitted the word "after," since Binger assumes that the Mossi, after taking Timbuktu in 1326 by order of the Mali, remained there until 1433, having, therefore, one century of contact with the Touareg. In reality, the Mossi stayed in Timbuktu only a very short time, and this raid could not have given them a prolonged contact with the Touareg from whom they were separated before the fall of Timbuktu, and again as soon as they left the town, by the entire Songhai country stretching along the banks of the Niger River. On the contrary, if they had formerly occupied Djerma, before the Djermabé or the Songhai, one can easily understand this contact with the Touareg as well as the existence of the sword with the short crutch-handle /poignée en croix (Binger wrongly calls this straight sword a saber). In addition, when Binger speaks of the Targui /Tuareg/ dress, adopted in part by the Mossi, he doubtless thinks of the lithâm (or face veil) which was then worn by the Mossi horsemen. At the present time, they are no longer worn, and I have never seen them among the Mossi, where I lived 1908-1909.

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171 do, the crutch-handled /poignée en croix/ saber."

174 Actually, we must admit that we know nothing certain about the Mossi outside of Dagomba. This is what I /12/ clearly stated in my Noir du Yatenga /Blacks of Yatenga/ (1917) (1). The move into

1. See pp. 57 and 58.

Djerma is conjectural, and the question concerning the Mossah would have to be settled by an inquiry made in the Cameroons. At one time I was tempted to connect the Mossi with the races of the south, the Agni-Achanti /Ashanti/, and it seems certain that close relationships exist (2) between the numerical vocabularies of the Voltaic

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2. See Appendix No. I. In addition, a woman called Aoura-Poko plays as important a part in the Baoulé historic tradition as in the Mossi historic tradition. And, although the word for woman is oba, eba, bla in Achanti, Abron, and Baoulé, the Baoulé heroine is called Poko, like Poko (woman) or Pokotoéga (woman of the baobab) of the Mossi tradition.

group and the Agni-Achanti group. But can one base a linguistic comparison on vocabulary alone? It would also have to be proven, grammatically speaking, that the Voltaic linguistic group is very close to the Agni-Achanti group. (3) And this has not yet been done.

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3. Delafosse says that there is no special relation between these two groups from a grammatical viewpoint. In a more general manner, Delafosse would now like to believe, as far as Mossi origins are concerned, that Mossi residence in their present country goes back far before the eleventh century A. D. Apparently only a band of pillagers and happy warriors, a princely dynasty came

- 141 • /14/ 3. Page 524. If Dr. Ruelle had taken care to measure Mossi women, it is probable that the cephalic index would have been larger, since we know, for instance, that Lobi women have an average horizontal cephalic index of 75.89, while the men have only 74.36; Birifon women have 77.35, while the men have only 74.58; and finally, Dagari women have 72.32, while the men have only 72.09. This means that the women have a shorter skull than the men, yet it is no broader, that is to say, they have a smaller cerebral capacity. This also undoubtedly means that these women's ancestors probably belonged, more or less, to the pygmy or Negrito race whose unequivocal traces are still found on the Ivory Coast, a racial group with skulls shorter than those of the tall Negroes without being commensurately broader, quite the contrary.

We see, thus, that 12 Mossi out of 100 are ultradolichocephalic or hyperdolichocephalic, 53 are properly called dolichocephalic, 32 subdolichocephalic, and 3 are subbrachycephalic.

The average is 74.65, that is, clearly dolichocephalic. The extremes of the indices are: maximum, 81.76; minimum, 65.62. The spread is 16.14.

141 The peoples who most resemble the Mossi on Dr. Ruelle's table
171 are:

the Ouangarbé or Yarsé	74.95	(average)
the Samo	74.90	"
the Nounouma	74.40	"
the Birifon	74.58	"
the Lobi	74.36	"

141 The nasal index for 100 Mossi is:

1 where the nasal index figures between 80 and 84.9

141	2	where the nasal index figures between 85 and 89.9
	9	- between 90 and 94.9
	14	- between 95 and 99.9
	29	- between 100 and 104.9
	17	- between 105 and 109.9
	11	- between 110 and 114.9
	15	- between 115 and 119.9
	2	- above 120

The average is 104.60. Considered in detail, we find one mesorrhine (up to 85), 23 platyrrhine (from 85 to 100) and 74 hyperplatyrrhine (from 100 to 120) (1).

1. Page 538.

(171) The Mossi is thus decidedly platyrrhine and even hyperplatyrrhine, although less so than the Bambara.

As far as height is concerned, the average of 94 Mossi men is 1.71 /15/ (exactly 1.712). But this average would be quite a bit lowered if Dr. Ruelle could have measured women (1).

(171) 1. Lobi women measure on the average 1.66, while the men measure 1.75; Birifon women measure 1.62, while the men measure 1.75; Dagari women are 1.59, while the men are 1.72 (p. 550).

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144 In conclusion, Dr. Ruelle's study tells us that the Mossi are dolichocephalic, platyrrhine, and tall. These are characteristics usually attributed to the Black race in general (tall Negroes, not Negritos). These traits do not differentiate the Mossi to any extent from the peoples surrounding them. In order to reach anthropological conclusions about the origin of the Mossi, more far-reaching somatic studies than those now in existence will need to be made on the Mossi themselves and on the hundreds of Negro tribes living in the Sudan, between Abyssinia and the Atlantic and between the Sahara and the Gulf of Guinea.

794 sunrise and at sunset, during the first week of the winter season, then, later, only every six days, in the morning at sunrise. They go to the [778] altars, formed by three conical stones, to offer sacrifices and libations, always surrounded by all the people, the heads of families, tom-tom players, and family masks (Ouango).

[372] "During the entire year, in a highly decorated niche dug into a wall of their houses, the priests watch the sacred fire with which, at the end of the rainy season, they must light the great purifying brush fires."

Lieutenant Desplagnes adds in a note:

"They make sacrifices at each new moon, and then have seven great feasts each year for the divinity. Finally, during the sun festivals, [237] they use a cow's tail to tie the sun to the earth and assure its fertilizing warmth." /31/

794 In my book Noir du Soudan, Pays Mossi et Gourounsi /Blacks of
 171 the Sudan, Country of the Mossi and Gourounsi/ (1912), I reproduced this page of Lieutenant Desplagnes without comment (page 590). In addition, I described the cult of the sun among the Gourounsi, who, like the Mossi, are part of the Voltaic family. Thus, on page 241, I wrote:

"The Kassonfra, like the Nounouma and the Menkiéra, say that they offer no sacrifice either to the moon or to the sun. However, I found an exception in the village of Nitiédougou (canton of Sia). It would seem that here, in the early mornings when the sun rises and begins to leave the horizon, people offer it a chicken or whatever else they wish to offer. Moreover, this sacrifice is only made when the voro (1) says it should be made.

1. Soothsayer.

"My informant claims that this same procedure is followed, not only in Nitiédougou and in the little canton of Sia, but also in all of the Kassouna (Kassonfra and Kassonboura) country. He must be mistaken (2) since my previous informants and my interpreter, who is

2. Today, on the other hand, I tend to think he was right.

Kassonboura, have neither seen nor heard of anything like it."

744 lightning as well, which he can do only if he is the Sky-Atmosphere.

[82] "The natural phenomena," he says, "are sometimes attributed to God. Lightning kills those who have done evil, it kills the animal ill-gotten through fraud or theft, and it is God who sends lightning as a punishment..." Thus, Ouendé, while being the sun, is also the Sky-Atmosphere, and other things too, for he has characteristics that go beyond the sun divinity and the sky divinity. We must not forget here [797] that the Allah of the Moslems is well known among the Mossi and has his established representatives there (Yaro of Mandé origin, Peul, etc.), or temporary ones (merchants who have come from the north or south, Soninnké/Soninke/, Songhay, Dyoula). Thus, for a long time, /33/ the Moslem conception of god could and has, in effect, rubbed off on the sun-atmosphere-god of the Mossi. The latter might have waged war on the Songhay sultans who led religious crusades against them, yet it is also true that they were content to bestow upon their most important god the remarkable characteristics that struck them and that they admired in the Moslem god. Thus, Ouendé gradually became more and more a supreme god, although it would seem that in the beginning, he was only a sun god and an atmosphere god, first separated, later fused with a predominance of the sun god element.

To summarize, it has been well established that one finds the cult of the sun among the Mossi, along with many other elements as we have just shown. I have since found this cult among the Dorhosié (1922) and the Gouro (1923). However, among the Gouro, it is relegated to a few fetishists and does not interest the bulk of the population. Among the Dorhosié, on the contrary, it interests the vast multitude and occasions a solemn sacrifice made in the winter, at the end of the old year and the beginning of the new. Among these people, however, the sun divinity has not become a leading divinity as it has among the Mossi. It is one divinity among several and is rather subordinate to the cult of the Earth-brush and that of the Sky-atmosphere. Moreover, I am persuaded that more far-reaching studies among all the branches of the Voltaic population would uncover, here and there, the cult of the sun, as among the Mossi, the Gourounsi, the Dorhosié, etc.

[pp. 34 ff. not processed]

631 these conquerors even adopted the language and culture of the indigenous
 642 populations, but introduced an "administrative machinery" that welded
 174 scattered local groups into loose confederacies without affecting in any
 114 great degree the inner life of these groups.⁸ Rattray's hypothesis appears
 to explain quite adequately the reasons for the cultural homogeneity of the
 Mossi and the other Voltaic peoples. It also conforms to what we know
 from recent historical times of the organizing and conquering abilities of
 such figures as Samory and El Hadj Omar. These men carved out veritable
 empires in this area in remarkably short periods. However, we need not
 accept Rattray's hypothesis that foreigners were the ones who instituted
 "administrative machinery" among the Mossi. It is highly possible that
 the Mossi state might have been the result of internal Voltaic develop-
 ment when one Dagomba lineage established its hegemony over scattered
 local people in this area. There is some evidence here that the Mossi
 state had many of the features of the widespread Negro pattern of political
 structure so common to the other Sudanic states, and this fits in very well
 with what Professor Greenberg reports about the basic African nature of
 these states.⁹

631 It is clear that the Mossi state was a complex entity and many persons
 642 cannot describe it without calling it feudal.¹⁰ However, the question of
 121 feudalism itself is a vexing one, and many scholars limit the use of this
 171 term to describe the political system of medieval France and possibly
 Japan. In fact, not many people would admit the presence of feudal states
 in Africa although some, such as S. F. Nadel, who worked among the
 Nupe, call the Sudanic states feudal and talk about fiefs and vassalage.
 It is now generally agreed that feudalism, despite its other aspects, is
 basically a form of government. Stephenson gives the classic features of
 a feudal state as: (1) fief-holding with vassalage; (2) homage and fealty;
 (3) mutual obligations between lords and vassals; (4) military service from
 the vassals; (5) inheritance of fiefs by heirs of vassals, usually by primo-
 geniture; (6) subinfeudation; (7) attendance at court; and (8) wardship and
 marriage arrangements by which fiefs could be held in trust for minors and,
 in the case of female heirs, husbands who can render homage for them.¹¹

An examination of the Mossi political system in terms of the first six
 characteristics of feudalism shows that this system conforms very well
 to the specifications for a feudal system. The Mossi did not have an
 elaborate court structure on the European model and, since only mature
 males could inherit fiefs, no arrangements for wardships and marriages
 were necessary. Furthermore, I do not think that these two traits are
 necessary for feudalism, and they can be considered as cultural content
 that need not be present in all social processes with similar functions.

Mossi-like societies present a special problem to political theorists
 because of the importance of kinship in their political systems. Coulborn¹²
 strongly insists that "A feudal society... is based on contract. It is not

based on kinship." He contrasts the Gesellschaft feudal system with the tribal Gemeinschaft, and recognizes the possible transition from Gemeinschaft relationships to Gesellschaft relationships in the evolution of culture. However, this admission places Coulborn on the horns of a dilemma as he does not accept feudalism as a step in the evolution of the state, but as a form of government that develops after the breakdown of a state and is used for state restoration. He states that "The place of feudalism in the rise of civilized societies is not yet complete, but we must pause to notice the profound importance of the substitution of something different for kinship relations."¹³ We see from the Mossi data that they used kin bonds instead of warrior-band bonds as the basis for delimiting the persons chosen for government. The warrior-band members were rewarded with hereditary administrative positions. It must be emphasized, however, that despite kinship bonds, it was the loyalty of a man that determined whether his heirs received his fief... These new vassals were required to renew pledges of allegiance to a ruler sometimes very remotely related. It must be borne in mind that kinship does play a part in political systems that range from feudalism to twentieth century Western democracy.

We cannot fail to observe that it was in regard to the society of the Chou period in China, one similar to that of the Mossi, that Coulborn was compelled to withhold judgment as to the nature of its political system. Shang society seemed to have had many of the tribal characteristics of the people found in the pre-Mossi Voltaic area. Chou had to face the problems of ancestor veneration associated with the tribal lands, and used some of the same techniques as the Mossi. Coulborn found many of these features "foreign to a tribal society" and finally decided to "leave open the decision as to whether Chou China developed a feudal system or a system of city states as its first enduring polity."¹⁴

In conclusion I shall say that the political system of the Mossi had definite feudal characteristics. These feudal characteristics did not come as a result of the breakdown of a pre-existing state, but served as techniques for building a state from small scattered groups. I should certainly like to keep open the whole question of feudalism, especially as it applies to the question of the origin of the pristine state, until more comparative data from Africa can shed additional light on this important subject.

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PETER B. HAMMOND

13. *Economic Change and Mossi Acculturation*

121 Some five thousand Mossi from the kingdom of Yatenga in the Upper
 178 Volta have been resettled on the newly developed lands of the Niger
 177 Irrigation Project in the French Sudan. Removed from a cultural setting
 166 which has been relatively undisturbed by the influence of European
 civilization, they are required to adapt themselves rapidly to an economic situation structured and directed by Europeans. Economic organization being the variable involved, a study of their adjustment provides an opportunity to examine some of the cultural problems and processes related to economic development in underdeveloped areas.

131 Yatenga is the northernmost of four Mossi kingdoms located in the
 101 Upper Volta. It is a sub-Saharan savanna land of red earth, low rainfall, gently rolling plains, and low hills. Ouahigouya, the capital, gives its name to the French administrative unit, the Cercle de Ouahigouya, which has governed the kingdom from its headquarters in this ancient city since its conquest in 1895.¹

101 To distinguish themselves from the people of the neighboring kingdoms of Ouagadougou, Fada-N'Gourma, and Tenkodogo, the Mossi of
 173 the Yatenga sometimes speak of themselves as "Yadise" (those of Yadiga). This name refers to the fact that they regard themselves as being descended, as a nation, from Naba Yadiga, the half-mythical warrior-prince from Ouagadougou who broke away from his father's dynasty to form the separate political entity, Yatenga, which bears his name to the French administrative unit, the Cercle de Ouahigouya, which has governed the kingdom from its headquarters in this ancient city since its conquest in 1895.¹

171 Highly organized politico-religious states representing the cultural amalgamation of native and foreign populations and institutions are characteristic of the Voltaic region of West Africa. Acknowledging that we "owe to Rattray the discovery that these central Voltaic tribes are

¹ Capitaine Noire, *Monographie du Cercle de Ouahigouya* (Ouahigouya, 1904), p. 15.

Economic Change and Mossi Acculturation

composed of two major groups of communities," Fortes goes on to describe this pattern succinctly: 171

On the one side are those that claim to be descendants of immigrants from parts of the country other than their present habitats. On the other side are communities that claim to be the autochthonous inhabitants. . . . Many of the immigrant communities claim descent from forbears of the Mampuru ruling stock. Though now wholly amalgamated with the alleged aboriginal inhabitants, they have certain ritual observances and a system of chieftainship similar to those of the Mamprusi. . . . The institution distinctive of the autochthonous communities is the office of "Custodian of the Earth." This ritual office, involving priestly functions in connection with the cult of the Earth, is found among many West African peoples from the Senegal to the mouth of the Niger. In the Voltaic region it is the exclusive prerogative of the autochthonous communities.² [793]

The inhabitants of the Yatenga at the time of the arrival of the Mossi were the Kurumankobe, or Fulse, as they are called by the Mossi. Their descendants recognize their indigenous origin but have become almost wholly acculturated to the Mossi. While most Mossi bear the sib name Wedraogo and maintain political control in the Yatenga, the descendants of the Kurumankobe usually have the sib name Savadogo and are excluded from the exercise of political authority. They have retained the custodianship of the earth, and the elders of their lineages and sibs are the Mossi's *Tenga Soba namba*, their "earth custodians," charged with propitiating the supernatural forces of nature. [793]

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The present king of the Yatenga, the *Yatenga Naba*, is a lineal descendant of the first ruler, Naba Yadiga. The members of the lineage of the king are called "those who maintain themselves upon us" (*riim namba*). Directly subordinate to the authority of the *Yatenga Naba* are his four grand ministers, each of whom has authority over a particular province (*solum*) of the Yatenga.³ [631] [644] [635]

The province over which each of the grand ministers presides as lord is divided up into a number of cantons (*tense*), each of which is ruled by a chief who is the central political authority both of the village in which he resides and of the villages within the canton. Like the province, the concept of the canton is not precisely territorial. Some villages may owe

² Meyer Fortes, *The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi* (London: Oxford University Press, 1945), p. 6.

³ These provinces refer not only to geographical areas of the kingdom but to particular categories of the population. For example, the *Balum Naba* has direct authority over the southern regions of the Yatenga and indirect authority over the cantons of Riziam and Zittenga, political entities which have never fully recognized the central authority of the *Yatenga Naba*. This same minister is also especially charged with maintaining liaison with certain of the more important earth custodians throughout the Yatenga. [631] [634]

244

The Mossi also grow sorrel.

They have two kinds, the dakissé sorrel and the dangono sorrel. These are Bambara names. In Mossi, dakissé is called bi and dangono is called ouéréda.

The Mossi plant bi around the millet fields at the same time as millet, at the beginning of the winter season. Holes are made with a koutiaga for the seeds, which are put in by hand and covered with earth. Then the plants are allowed to grow. After three months, the sorrel is ripe. The leaves are then removed to be used in the sauce, and the stalk is cut at mid-height to get the seeds, which are also used in the sauce.

[71]

Like the Bambara, the Mossi sometimes plant both kinds of sorrel in the peanut and underground pea loutan, and sow them along with these plants when the first rains begin to fall. The sorrel is gathered eight days after the peanuts and underground peas.

252

The Mossi cook dakissé seeds in a canari full of water. Then they remove the jar from the fire and top it with another one that covers the mouth of the first jar completely. This is allowed to sit for four or five days, and then the dakissé seeds are removed and ground in a small mortar to make flour.

Then the ashes of burnt wood are placed with water in a perforated gourd that serves as a filter. /480/ The ashes are filtrated into a canari that stands underneath. They are then mixed with dakissé flour and transferred to a canari that is left covered for five or six days. When these are over, the mixture is cooked for the last time. It is placed in a gourd that is perforated and that sits on a canari full of water. The water is heated, and the vapor comes in through the small holes in the upper gourd and steams the dakissé for an hour. The paste thus obtained is dried in the sun for a whole day, and then placed in a canari where it is sought as the need arises.

Like the Bambara the Mossi sometimes take the dakissé seeds, mix them with millet grains, boil the whole thing, and then eat it.

As for the leaves, they are cooked by being placed in water and boiled with salt.

As far as dangono or ouéréda is concerned, the Mossi, like the Bambara, remove the bark. They allow this bark to cook in water, and add crushed peanuts and salt. The sauce thus obtained is called ziédo by the Mossi and na by the Bambara.

137 They are 7 or 8 meters tall, 10 meters at most, and their huge fruits are bunched in clusters of five or six rather than forty or fifty.

137 There are no rônier in the Mossi bush itself, but there are some
222 in every Mossi village. They originated from seeds tossed at random after eating the fruits, or from an ancient cultivation of the tree.

The rônier, therefore, is not a natural product of Mossi territory and should not, in all exactitude, be listed among the gathering crops. On the other hand, can it be listed with the cultivated crops at the present day, and can we call cultivation the act of tossing seeds to the ground in order to get rid of them? No matter what the truth may be, the Mossi eat /503/ the fruits of their rônier but do not extract any palm wine. As we have just said, they use the fibers of the leaves for their wickerwork.

137 While the rônier occur in Mossi territory, there are, on the other hand, no palm-oil trees and palmier-ban /?/. Those begin to appear only in Gourounsi territory, to the south of the Mossi.

222
137 We have just reviewed the most important gathering trees in the area, but the Mossi bush contains many others, less important to be sure but nevertheless useful, which we shall now mention.

First, there is the ganra or ganga (sounsoun in Mandé, diomba in Peuhl and Sarakolé). This is the medlar tree of West Africa. In appearance, it is a big tree similar to the karité but even bigger, with a thicker and more powerful trunk.

The fruit is a medlar, smaller than the European one. When green, it has the same acrid taste and numbs the mouth. When ripe, it is such as we eat it in Europe. The natives begin to eat it during the rainy season and consume it until January.

386
171 The wives of Bambara blacksmiths make a varnish for pots and canari with the bark of the sounsoun. As for the wives of Mossi blacksmiths, they prefer to use for this purpose the bark of two trees we shall mention later, the nobora and the sibi. In Gourounsi territory, on the other hand, the women who make pottery pluck the medlars while still green and crush them. They add water, thus making a sort of varnish which they use on the canari after they are fired. The ganra is called kano in Nounouma, kakano in Kassouna, kalo in Sissala, and ganra or ganga in Nankana and Mossi.

825 Let us add that among the Mossi, as in all of West Africa, the ganra tree is closely related to fetishistic superstitions, and will be mentioned again in a later chapter on religion.

592 father cannot procure one or delays too long in doing so. The son
 584 who secedes in this fashion goes to work for a chief or noble who
 464 will later give him a wife as a reward. The first male child and the
 565 first female child born of this union, however, will devolve to the
 chief or noble who gave the wife. He will use the male child as a
 servant, and the girl to be handed out as a reward to someone work-
 ing for him. This is a side effect of the political organization on
 the family. This secession on the part of sons can only occur, in-
 deed, thanks to the existence of chiefs and nobles in sufficient num-
 bers to permit the secessionists to find work and employment among
 them without difficulty. Among the Bobo and Nounouma, such a
 situation could not exist.

Let us note that this institution, while restricting the authority
 of the family head or household head, has strengthened the power
 of the Mossi aristocracy.

592 In closing, let us note a few details about the Mossi soukala
 361 from a physical standpoint. It is a cluster of round huts, about five
 or six of them, usually built of red earth with a straw roof and con-
 nected to each other by a concave wall made likewise of red earth.
 The soukala is thus fortified, as it were, and sheltered from the out-
 side.

592 The Mossi soukala is quite similar to the Malinké or Dialonké
 361 "compound" /literally, "square"/, which also consists of a cluster
 of clay huts with straw roofs. Among the Malinké and Dialonké,
 171 however, the huts are often connected by a palisade or a mere séko
 instead of a red earth wall as they are here. Another difference is
 /557/ that the doors of the huts of the Mossi soukala are so low
 that one must often creep in on all fours. Furthermore, there are
 no porches such as are found among the Malinké and Dialonké. In
 spite of those differences, however, the Mossi soukala bear a general
 resemblance to the Guinean soukala, while they are in no way related
 to the massive citadels of the Gourounsi and Kipirsi.

The Mossi soukala, on the other hand, are set about 50 meters
 apart. The maize plot surrounding the soukala lies directly around
 it, as among the Bobo, Gourounsi, Kipirsi, etc., while among the
 Malinké and Dialonké of Guinea the garden plot of each compound
 is located outside the village boundaries, since the compounds stand

592 only one or two meters apart, close together. It is true that there
361 is sometimes a small plot within the séko....

171 The soukala or compound is called iri in Mossi, the hut rogo
or dogo, and the soukala head irisoba (from soba, "chief" and iri,
"compound").

462 We shall close this analysis of the Mossi family with a few notes
562 on the status of women and that of slaves.

First of all, Mossi women help with the tilling. They do not clear the fields, it is true, but they participate in all other field tasks along with the men. They do this only in the morning, however, since they spend the afternoon on household tasks or on their little individual plots, for they have small fields of large white millet, underground peas, beans, or peanuts.

They also do household tasks: they pound and crush the grain. Large millet or sorghum is, as we know, pounded first and then crushed, while small millet is crushed after being threshed.

462 The Mossi set their crushing stones in huge round clay /banco/
252 tables which are built outside the soukala and which are used by
412 the whole quarter. This is a strictly Mossi characteristic which is not found among the /558/ Bobo, Gourounsi, etc., in short, among any of the other groups who nevertheless use the same stones. Those large round tables are not high. They are about 1 or 1.20 meters in height and approximately 6 meters in diameter, with a correspondingly large circumference. The Mossi set in their crushing stones all around the circumference, and each table can thus hold ten, twelve, or even more. Every evening at nightfall the women of the soukala which are around it, women, young girls, etc., come together to crush their grain. They are usually in the simplest of garb, bare as the back of my hand, for the work is hard and demands a continuous back-and-forth motion of the arms, the upper part of the body, and the body as a whole.

To make those tables, they first build a circular wall to the desired height of the table, and then the whole inner space is filled up with earth almost to the top. This earth is pounded thoroughly, and then well-tamped casings are fashioned on the horizontal circumference in which are set the stones on which the crushing is done. The stones are firmly ensheathed in the clay, which is then allowed to dry.

462 Those large tables are called niénouga in Mossi, the stones on
 252 which the crushing is done are called néré, and the movable stones
 412 used for crushing are called nérébila "little néré".

- 171 We stated above that those large clay tables are peculiarly
 252 Mossi and are not to be found among the Bobo, Habé, or Gourounsi.
 412 Actually the latter, as we saw earlier, set their stones in small clay
 tables which are only 1 meter high and 1 meter in diameter and thus
 quite small, and which stand in every soukala inside each woman's
 room. They also make slightly larger tables, long ones that look
 like large earthen bathtubs of a sort or that even bear a certain re-
 semblance to crude sarcophagi, and into which the stones are set.
 Those, too, stand within the soukala, in dark, dirty rooms. Some-
 times, the Gourounsi merely set down their crushing stones under a
 shelter covered with wood and straw, built at the gate of their
 citadel-soukala. Three or four stones are placed upon two thick
 and solid parallel sticks which in turn are held /559/ about 50 centi-
 meters from the ground on four solid forks thrust into the ground.
 In this case the woman must kneel down in order to crush the grain.
 I have observed this method chiefly among the Menkiéra, that is to
 say, in the northern part of the Leo residency.

462 To go back to female work among the Mossi. Along with the
 crushing of grain, they do the cooking, fetch firewood and water,
 do the gathering, prepare the products derived from gathering, etc.
 We saw earlier how those products are made, and we shall not go
 over it again.

252 Among the Mossi, the only known millet dishes are sarabout
 171 and vessala. Couscous is unknown. This is rather strange, since
 the dish thus called is known practically throughout West Africa.
Sarabout (the Mossi word) is what the Malinké and Bambara
 call rô, the Foulbé, Toucouleur, and Foulah niri, the Sarakolé
souré, the Maure /Moors/ lisi.

As for couscous, the Malinké and Bambara call it baci, the
 Foulbé, Toucouleur, and Foulah lakiri, the Sarakole fouto, the
 Moors and Arabs couscous.

To or sarabout is prepared for immediate consumption. Couscous
 is prepared for relatively long storage.

252 This is how their methods of preparation differ. To make to or sarabout, one simply leaves the millet flour to cook in boiling water, stirring occasionally with a piece of wood or a spoon. To make couscous, on the other hand, one takes a canari, fills it with water, sets it to boil on the fire, and then puts the millet into a gourd which is perforated at the bottom and thus makes a sort of strainer. This gourd is placed over the canari where the water is boiling, and covered with a straw dish. The steam emanating from the canari comes through the holes into the gourd, and since the latter is covered the steam remains there a long time. The millet flour is thus cooked by steaming. At the end of a period of time, the gourd is removed and its contents are left to cool and to dry in the sun. Once the millet flour has thus been cooked and dried, it will keep /560/ almost indefinitely. It is eaten either with water or with milk, which is better, or else, if one has some meat, by boiling the latter and pouring the sarabout into the pot.

The Mossi may not be familiar with couscous, but they are familiar with vessala. This method of preparing millet consists of boiling the flour as it is boiled for sarabout. The difference lies in the amount of flour used. When the mush has been cooked it is allowed to cool, and then fresh or curdled milk is bought and mixed in with it. This kind of mush is made only for the purpose of mixing it with milk. The Bambara are familiar with vessala and call it by name of fisan or finsan.

484 The Mossi, when they are traveling, often cook millet grains
252 which have not been reduced to flour. This is called honandourou-ki
171 ("cooked millet"). The Bambara call it niobalabala, the Foulbe
m'bafna-gaouri, the Sarakolé ilé-n'kioro, and all these words have
the same meaning. This method of preparing millet is quite unusual, and is resorted to only when the time or means to reduce millet grains to flour are lacking.

1462 Mossi women also make dolo (dama). To do this, they soak the
273 grains of large red millet in water for two days, and then expose them to the sun and crush them. The flour is boiled for two hours, and then strained and boiled in the necessary amount of water for a whole day. This is transferred to another canari and allowed to cool.

567 As for the bagaré, they live separately, work for themselves, see to their own subsistence, etc.

Their duties are as follows:

1. To come and work one day a week on their master's field (on that day, as on other days, they provide their own food).

2. To come and work for their master in exceptional circumstances, such as for example when the master gathers all his neighbors to work on his field.

3. To come and greet their master every year after the harvest. They give him a basketful of millet. When the harvest has been poor, they are exempted from this gift.

4. The master may request from his slave chickens, sheep, an ox or a cow. Chickens may not be denied under any circumstances. As for sheep or beeves, the slave may refuse to provide the animal requested, but then he is expected to go and sell it at market right away, and to give half the money to his master. If the slave refuses to go and sell the animal at market, the master has the right to seize his movable property and sell it.

[426] 5. When the master has debts, the bagaré must help him pay them.

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567 As for inheritance, when a bagaré died his master left all the property to the children. The oldest son of the bagaré inherited, but he gave something to the other sons. If there was no son, the younger brother inherited. If the sons were children the younger brother also inherited, at least temporarily. If there were no male heirs, the master inherited the property but gave some to the daughters.

567 In short, the position of the bagaré is more similar to that of /566/ serfs than to that of slaves proper. In this respect, their status is a far cry from the familial status of the slaves we have described up to now, and it is much closer to the status of the Dialonké,

[171] Soussou /Susu/, and Foulah slaves of Guinea who are also serfs, work three days a week for their master (six hours a day), and are free the rest of the time on condition of seeing to their own subsistence.

567 Let us add that since the arrival of the French among the Mossi, the bagaré have gained a considerable amount of freedom. Nowa-
178 days, most of them will not give any of their crops to their master.

687
631 Moulins adds, "Custom does not anticipate the possibility of a chief being, properly speaking, stripped of his rule. A naba who gives the sovereign reasons for complaint is summoned under a pretext of some sort and put to death without further ceremony at the close of the audience granted to him. If the chief, guessing at the true purpose of the Moro Naba's invitation, demurs at going, a column is sent into the region over which he rules with the mission of seizing him and taking him to the Moro Naba, who has him put to death by his pages."

622 Let us add that in the Mossi /language/ a village chief is called tengasoba or tenganaba, from tenga, "earth, place, spot" and by extension "village," and from naba or soba, "chief." There are also chiefs of quarters called sakanaba, sakasoba, or sakakasaman, from saka, "quarter," and naba, soba, or kasaman, "chief." Mossi villages are indeed divided into quarters located some 200, 300, 400, or 500 meters apart and consisting of several soukala which usually stand, as we know, 40 or 50 meters apart. When the head of a quarter dies, it is the oldest soukala chief in the quarter who replaces him.

565 Below the Moro Naba and the chiefs of provinces, cantons, and villages, there existed among the Mossi a true aristocracy, a genuine nobility, the nakomse, or sons of chiefs. "They were granted," says Moulins, "important privileges. They had the right to loot passing caravans and to demand from the common natives gifts of cowries, livestock, grain, etc., which the latter could not deny them. They were forbidden to kill, but if they committed murder, instead of being put to death, they were merely put in irons for a short period of time. Furthermore, they were granted the privilege of being tried only by the Moro Naba, head of their house, for all their crimes and misdemeanors." They are all descended, or supposed to be descended, from Moro Naba Oubry, conqueror of Mossi territory.

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171 The existence of this aristocracy among the Mossi must be carefully noted, for it distinguishes them sharply from the populations we have studied up to now, Bobo, Nounouma, Kassouma, Sissala, Dagari, etc. Nobles are not found often among the Blacks of West Africa, and they are found only among groups that are, or formerly

565
171 were, conquerors. This represents a higher level of social complexity and development, in short, a higher level of civilization.

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556 The nakomsé were and still are gathered in separate villages scattered throughout the territory. They did the same work as other Mossi, but prior to the French occupation they also practiced looting, which was their chief expedient, their major source of wealth. True, this manner of acquiring wealth had lent them improvident habits. Nowadays they own no more small livestock than the Mossi populace, and only a little more large livestock, while they should own much more in view of their former opportunities to acquire wealth. They immediately "ate-up" what they looted, however, counting on future pillage. Nowadays they no longer loot, but they seem to have preserved their former improvident habits. It should be noted, however, that they own considerably more horses than other Mossi.

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142 I saw at Pirigui, in January, 1909, one of those villages of chiefs' sons. There were altogether 841 inhabitants of the nobility with their families and their slaves. Those people would be interesting to study from the point of view of physical anthropology. There were faces totally at variance with Negro faces, truly distinguished physiognomies, oriental and semitic casts of features, in short, enough /579/ to strike an observer even though unfamiliar with physical anthropology.

642 The superstructure of the Mossi state thus consisted of a supreme chief, a carefully established hierarchy of chiefs, and a class of nobles to whom important privileges were granted.

651 As for taxes, "every year at the end of the winter season, prior to our occupation," says Moulins, "the canton chiefs had to come, greet the Moro Naba, and offer him certain gifts (beeves, sheep, millet) which constituted a sort of fixed due." This was the common tax levied after each harvest.

"In addition, whenever the sovereign needed anything whatever, he requested the province chiefs to secure it for him. They summoned the canton chiefs, who in turn gathered the village chiefs, who secured through the soukala chiefs the animals, grain, cowries, and other items requested.

[431] "Finally, whenever a native, chief or common man, came to the Moro Naba, he offered a present to the latter.

535 while the ouango are singing will surely die within the year. (The
 532 ouango sing at the funeral ceremonies of important personages, at the
 575 second ceremony performed a month or a year after the burial).
 The masks of the ouango are made in the greatest secrecy. They
 have to be carved out of a single piece of wood, and the man who
 is making one must not be seen as long as his task has not been
 completed.

535 "In our opinion it would be most interesting to try and study
 575 the ouango and their customs more closely than we succeeded in
 171 going. We believe, indeed, that theirs is a very old institution
 174 antedating the arrival of the Mossi in the Volta basin, an institu-
 tion which they found among the peoples they conquered and which
 they preserved, no doubt because they did not dare fight it. Ouango
 are to be found throughout Gourounsi territory, and the dou noticed
 by Binger among the Bobo would seem to have the same origin.
 The dancers with totemic masks who appear in some of Desplagnes'
 photographs are quite similar to the Mossi ouango."

The Mossi ouango are thus no different from the Bobo dou, the
 Khassonké mamadiombo, the Habé and Bambara namakoro, the
 Malinké dokho, the Landouman /Landuma/ simo, etc.

713 The Earth chief or Tensoba is also part of the Mossi priestly
 174 organization. We are already familiar with Earth chiefs, whom we
 encountered among the Gourounsi. They exercise no political
 authority in the village, but they are entrusted with the performance
 of sacrifices to the Earth and to other local divinities.

The presence of those Earth chiefs among the Mossi is no doubt
 to be explained by the superposition of the conquering group over the
 conquered group. When the Mossi invaded and conquered the country,
 they placed their own men at the head of all the villages and all the
 cantons in the course of conquest, /595/ to ensure the submission of
 the vanquished population. They never felt, however, (and they hold
 this in common with the rest of West Africa) that they were them-
 selves qualified to offer sacrifices to the Earth and other divinities
 of the place. Only the vanquished, former owners of the latter and
 on good terms with it, were qualified to do this. The former
 autochthonous political chief thus naturally became a religious chief
 under Mossi authority. We have already seen that the Moro Naba

304 occasion calls for festivities that last for one month, and it is repeated every seven or eight years in each village.

As for girls, they undergo the barbarous operation of excision when they are from eight to twelve years old. The girls' excision is not performed at the same time as the boys' circumcision, but in another year. The attendant festivities also last for one month.

The girls are operated on by a woman, the boys by a man.

It is not the labia of the girls that are severed, but the clitoris itself. Why do this? My informants did not know. Is it to make the weaker sex less susceptible to sensual pleasures? No. It would rather be, my informants tell me, to facilitate the physical union of men and women. This would also be the aim of the boys' circumcision. But my informants were not sure.

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171 We might note that among the Mossi, as in certain other parts of West Africa, for example in Guinea (but not among the Gourounsi, where boys are not circumcised /598/ and girls are often excised at birth), circumcision and excision are combined with an initiation, that is to say, are closely connected with the education and instruction of young men and girls. One takes advantage of the circumcision or excision to complete, so to speak, the instruction and education of youth.

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304 Marc has the following to say about the subject (op. cit., p. 150). "The circumcision of boys takes place around the age of twelve and occasions important festivities. There seems to be a sort of initiation ceremony, which is performed in rather mysterious circumstances. Unfortunately, it is difficult to find out exactly what does take place."

000 We close our survey of Mossi religion by referring the reader to Appendix 33 /not translated/ for a few complementary details on the Moslem question in the territory. We have also concluded our description of Mossi society as a whole. In order to gain a deeper understanding of its origins as far as the conquering population is concerned, we shall now have a glance at the Foutanké social type in the following chapter /not translated/.

584 daughter; (2) when the father is in extreme penury, he gives his still
596 unpromised daughter to some rich native who, with the customary gifts,
will help him in his need, since the gifts of the fiancé go to the man
who promised the young girl; (3) the first daughter in a household,
[60] whether or not she is the only daughter, must be promised by her
maternal grandfather and not by the head of the family."

This constitutes, I believe, a curious vestige of matriarchy which doubtless refers to those very distant times when the Mossi family revolved around the maternal rather than the paternal line.

4. The mother of the young girl. "The girl's mother," says Vadier, "is sometimes consulted. Her husband merely asks her if she is satisfied with the choice he has made in agreement with the head of the family. Her answer, however, is given no weight whatever. "The fiancé's mother is not even consulted."

Such at least is the theory. In reality, no doubt, the mother of the young girl often has more authority than the theory supposes.

431 Gifts.—Bride price is nonexistent in Mossi marriage. This is a very
583 important point which differentiates the Mossi and even, I believe,
[71] the Voltaic /237/ tribes in general, from the Mandé groups, such as the Bambara and Malinké, where bride price does exist and is actually quite high (I say quite high, considering the general poverty of the Sudanese). I did not emphasize this sufficiently in my Noir du Soudan in the chapter concerning the Mossi family, pages 548 and 549. I did mention that the price paid to win a Mossi girl of the Ouagadougou region ranged from 1,500 cowries (1.50 francs) to 50,000 cowries (50 francs). In fact, these are gifts rather than bride price.

Although there is no bride price, properly speaking, the gifts have an important role.

"After the promise of marriage," says Vadier, "the future husband must come every year, after the filikienga /a feast/, to bring a few small gifts to the head of the family and to the girl's mother. These consist as a rule of a little millet, salt, a few hundred cowries, a mat, or two or three crudely made séko /coarse matting/.

"As for the father, he receives no gifts, which does not mean that he does not benefit from those received by his wife or by the head of the family.

"Likewise, the girl receives no gifts. Moreover, she may not utilize the commodities or foodstuffs given to her mother.

"The gifts offered during the long betrothal period cannot be of great value. A prospective husband who should bring 5,000 or 6,000

582 I. Differences of tribe or caste. The Mossi may not contract
326 marriage with blacksmiths. This is absolutely forbidden. However,
564 they may marry among the Foulsé, Samo, Peul, Yarsé, etc. "

This calls for several remarks. The blacksmiths of Yatenga are Foulsé and not Mossi. However, it is not a tribal difference which dictates the prohibition under discussion, since the Mossi can marry among the Foulsé as a whole. It is rather a difference in caste. It must be noted, as we said above /not translated/, that the common Foulsé cannot marry blacksmiths either.

• [171] Here, as in all of the /French/ Sudan, blacksmiths are both feared and scorned. Basically, they are regarded as fearful sorcerers.

582 II. Kinship. There must be a lapse of 200 years between the time
of the betrothed couple and the time when their common ancestor lived. This is likewise an absolute impediment.

III. If a Mossi has relations with a young girl or woman belonging to his fiancée's soukala during the period of his engagement, the marriage cannot take place.

This impediment, however, is not absolute. If the guilty man begs for the forgiveness of the family head and the latter accords it, the union may be effected later. "

582 IV. Unnatural practices. The marriage cannot take place: (1) if
839 the betrothed man has been caught in the act of sexual intercourse with a she-ass (a phenomenon none too rare in Yatenga); and (2) if the betrothed girl has relations with a native who had sexual intercourse with a she-ass. These impediments are absolute.

This is why the inhabitants of a Yatenga village (Dénia) who are reputed to have had relations with asses in former times may not marry outside their locality.

582 V. Infirmities. If the fiancé is blind, the marriage may not take
[132] place unless the girl consents to it. No one can constrain her to do so.

VI. Leprosy. The same applies when the fiancé has leprosy.

VII. Impuberty of the betrothed pair. The marriage cannot take place unless both parties are nubile. This is an absolute impediment, but in practice the problem rarely arises.

VIII. Insanity of one of the betrothed. "

582 Question of virginity. The girl's virginity is not very important
836 here and, it must be pointed out, far less so than among the Bambara. This is, incidentally, connected with the fact that the marriage bond is less sound and the separation of the spouses easier to obtain. A combination of related facts makes the institution of marriage and

848 as soon as the baby is old enough to leave its mother, the husband, not wishing to keep it with him, will return the child to its natural father.

582 In short, virginity is not rigidly demanded of the girl, although it is considered better and more respectable than non-virginity. The Mossi are not as demanding on this point as the Bambara, and in this, according to my data, they are like all other Voltaic peoples.

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584 Let us note one further detail. If the lover from whom reparation is demanded for the damage caused, that is to say, the payment of the goat, chicken, and two canari of dolo, does not want to give them, the husband would formerly appeal /242/ to the Moro Naba, who forced the lover to pay what he owed and in addition confiscated for himself a part of his goods for his salary as a judge. If the lover owned nothing, his family paid for him. Nowadays, the village or canton chiefs are still approached about such matters, and they force the lover to make the customary payment.

593 Rights and duties of the husband and wife. — The husband owes assistance and help to his wife. He must protect her and come to her aid whenever necessary.

The husband must support his wife. To secure food, he usually belongs to a work group, as we have seen earlier. The work group sustains the husband and wife for seven months out of twelve. The rest of the time, the husband maintains the wife with the produce of his small fields. The wife also has her own little patches of cultivated land (as big as a handkerchief), but they are not used to procure food for the household unless the husband is completely destitute. Hence, the produce from these little patches of soil usually goes to the wife herself.

In any case, it is the husband and not the group who must provide clothing for his wife. He does this with the earnings from his small fields.

593 If the husband should refuse to support his wife, although able to do so, she would take her complaint to the head of her spouse's family. If the husband still refused to support her after the intervention of the family head, the woman would regain her freedom and could return to her family.

593 The husband must see to his ailing or invalid wife's upkeep until her death.

586 8. Incest. In case incest is committed by one of the spouses, the other has the right to request a divorce. The gifts remain in the husband's possession if the wife is guilty, or revert to her if it was the husband who committed incest."

Such are the major theoretical cases which may result in divorce. Let us first return to one of them: nonfulfillment of the conjugal duty on the husband's part. The results noted by Vadier seem contradictory to those which we mentioned above (under "conjugal duty"). Actually, no contradiction is involved. When a husband does not fulfill his conjugal duty toward his wife (this, incidentally, occurs quite rarely), either the woman has only praise for her husband in all /248/ other respects, or he is cruel and mean and she is dissatisfied with him on other counts. In the first instance, she takes a lover outside her husband's compound, a liaison to which he voluntarily shuts his eyes, and she does not request a divorce. In the second case, she does request one. That is how the situation is actually resolved.

[837] 586 Among the instances of divorce enumerated by Vadier, the most
837 frequent, or rather the least rare, are as follows. (1) Continual infidelity on the part of the wife. I say "continual," for as we have already noted, while in principle a single infidelity on the woman's part enables the husband to ask for a divorce, in actual fact a wife is never sent back for a single breach of the marriage contract. Instead, she is merely beaten. If the woman persists in betraying her husband, however, he eventually sends her away. (2) Insults passed
586 between each other by the husband and wife in a moment of anger do
578 not count, but insults by the husband about his wife's relatives or by a
602 wife about the husband's relatives are serious. (Incidentally, this
[577] sensitivity on the subject of relatives is not peculiar to the Mossi. It is common to all the Sudanese Negroes I have seen, Bambara, Malinké, etc.) Thus, if the husband insults his wife's relatives, she may request a divorce. Actually, a woman who loves her husband does not tell her relatives about insults which he may have aimed at them in a moment of anger. She says nothing and does not ask for a divorce. If she holds other grudges against her husband, however, or secretly wishes for a separation, she will eagerly take advantage of this motive which is considered to be serious. As regards the wife's insults against her husband's relatives (like the preceding, an unusual case among the Mossi), the same thing applies. Either the husband loves his wife and says nothing, or he does not love her and takes this opportunity to get rid of her.

857 The people fined must give three or four canari of dolo (the usual
575 canari of dolo is worth 150 cowries, or three sous).

The members assemble to eat, to drink dolo, and to dance to the sound of the tom-tom at the compound belonging to the father of the society's Moro Naba. The girls are invited to come and dance.

• [17] Among the Mossi of Yatenga, the nam do not have their own huts as do the Bambara ton and flambolo.

Little mock weddings are performed in the societies between the girls and boys. The young spouses offer each other small gifts of cowries, peanuts, cotton, etc.

Once married, the young girls withdraw from their society on account of their husband's jealousy. Married men, on the other hand, may remain in theirs and quite frequently do while they are young. Old men, however, are no longer members of the nam.

883 Young people's tasks. — Young men, after they are circumcised (at the age of 13 or 14), work in the compound or rather in the work group to which they belong on the same days and at the same hours as other members of the group.

They are provided with food by the head of the group seven months out of twelve and by their father five months out of twelve, and they are clothed by the latter.

They have their own little plots, but the produce does not belong exclusively to them. Their father and mother take what they need to feed or clothe the youth. The remainder is his. Boys can thus accumulate a little property of their own before they marry.

Young girls have no little plots of their own to cultivate. They learn how to till the soil by working with their mother in the fields of the work group and in the mother's little private plots. Hence, they are fed by the group seven months out of twelve and by their father and mother for five months, and they are clothed by their parents. The individual property they own consists mostly of trifling jewels usually received as gifts. /257/

583 Rights and duties of parents toward their children. — Paternal authority rests largely with the father of the child, but also partly with the head of the work group, the head of the compound, and the family head. This is understandable, since the child's support is ensured for the greater part of the time, except for clothing, by the work group and since lodging is ensured by the compound.

571 ship itself and the contract of interlineage co-operation and solidarity which
607 every marriage serves to establish or reinforce.⁴

593 Although this joking interchange is seen in its full implications when there
194 is an immediate source of dissension between marriage partners, it may also
571 occur in the absence of any specific difficulty. Then it is apparently indulged
in simply because it is expected, and for the pleasure which the Mossi, like all
people, derive from an occasion to exercise their wit. It is this relatively dis-
interested joking which has been most frequently described in the literature,
and this may account for the failure of many scholars to perceive more fully
the important social and psychological functions which joking may fulfill.

CONCLUSION

121 This paper has been written as a tentative step toward a reformulation of
the various and disparate observations on joking contained in the anthropo-
logical literature. I have contended that an analysis of this literature indicates
that wherever joking is institutionalized the structural relationship between
the participants tends to be characterized by five significantly interrelated
structural attributes: separation, reciprocity, ambivalence, equality, and inde-
pendence. I have also indicated that such joking may serve as an adjustive
mechanism by providing for the concurrent maintenance of communication,
control, and the culturally harmless catharsis of potentially disruptive emo-
tions.

571 A variety of forms of institutionalized joking found among the Mossi of
171 Yatenga have been cited to illustrate these points. However, I suggest that
the factors which cluster with this reliance on joking as an adjustive mecha-
nism are not unique to the Mossi. Institutionalized joking reported for
other parts of Africa appears to be structurally and processually similar.

NOTES

000 1. A shorter version of this paper was read at the annual meeting of the American
Anthropological Association held in San Francisco in November, 1963. It is based
101 on field research conducted among the Mossi from 1954 to 1956 with the assistance
of a Ford Foundation Fellowship.

571 2. Marriage between the members of descent groups united by a joking alliance is
582 regarded by the Mossi as highly desirable, apparently in recognition of the useful role
of joking as an adjustive mechanism. Once such a marriage is contracted, however,
602 Ego and his wife must take care that their joking insults are directed only at the
younger kinsmen of the other and that the insulting remarks are personal. It would,
for example, be acceptable for Ego to call his wife's younger sister a disreputable
shrew but dangerous to call her a slave (a term of disrespect used frequently in joking
between sibs). To refer to her as a slave would cast unflattering aspersions on her
entire kin group, including her mother and father, with whom, in their new status
as parents-in-law, Ego may no longer joke.

571 3. I believe that joking is also institutionalized between the Mossi and the Yarse, a
584 highly acculturated ethnic minority of Mande origin who live throughout Yatenga.
There is also joking between the Mossi and the indigenous blacksmith caste. Un-
fortunately my data on these two instances of joking are inadequate.

INTRODUCTION

5

the Niger-Congo family of African languages.⁶ Like the Mossi, these groups are primarily horticultural; cereals are their main crops, and they cultivate yams where conditions permit. Their social organization takes both patrilineal and matrilineal forms. The veneration of ancestors lies at the core of their religious beliefs, but the existence of an otiose high god whose name contains the root *We* (*Ouennam*, *Win*, *Wene*, etc.) is also recognized. There are also tutelary spirits, the chief one being a female earth deity associated with *We* and called *Tenga* (also occurring as *Teng*, *Tena*, and *Ten*). The *Tengsobadamba*, who are priests or custodians of the earth shrines, are found among all the groups in the Voltaic family, and they often share leadership with more secular chiefs called *Naba*, *Na*, or *Nab*. Most of the ruling clans of the Voltaic groups claim common ancestry and acknowledge the same totems.⁶

The only glaring dissimilarity between these Voltaic peoples, and the one with which this study is primarily concerned, lies in the realm of political organization. Some are united into large kingdoms, while others form small acephalous groups. Delafosse makes the following generalizations about the smaller groups:

It may be said of these people that, as a whole, they have remained quite primitive. With a few exceptions, they have not reached any significant level of political development; as a rule, they have not progressed beyond family unity. Although they neighbor on well-organized and powerful states such as the Mossi empires and the kingdoms of the Gourma and Bergo, which are inhabited by populations of the same ethnic group, they have derived little benefit from this proximity; some of them have been absorbed as subjects or vassals by these states, while others have remained on the outside, and seem to have but one purpose, the forceful preservation of their fierce but sterile independence. . . . Attachment to the land seems to be the only solid and fecund institution in their chaotic society.⁷

Rattray believes that the development of such highly organized political systems as those of the Mossi, Dagomba, and Mamprusi may be traced to "small bands of strangers." He thinks that the outsiders were better armed, better clothed, and familiar with the rudiments of Islam, and that since they knew about the institution of kingship, they were able to "superimpose upon the primitive tribes among whom they settled a new and unheard-of political conception, namely the idea of territorial and secular leadership in place of the immemorial institution of a ruler who was the high priest of a totemic clan and dealt only in spiritual sanctions." Nevertheless, Rattray is not certain that the Voltaic groups would not have evolved complex political systems if they had been left to themselves. He makes the significant statement that if the subjugation by the bands of strangers had not

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KINGSHIP AND CHIEFSHIP

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mal lineage segment except the pretenders to the throne shaved their heads as a sign of mourning. The royal pretenders donned sheepskin mantles to signify that they were willing to "eat the nam." Once the ruler had been buried, the country settled down to an uneasy peace until the eighth day, when the funeral ceremonies took place. In the meantime, the Napoko symbolically held daily court, and the Tansoba's army acted as a check against the attempts of ambitious princes to seize power by force of arms. [70]

Two days before the funeral, the Kamsaogho Naba selected the Kourita, who was to replace the Napoko as the living symbolic representative of the dead Mogho Naba. The person chosen to be Kourita was usually a young son of the deceased king, but since this person was banished from the capital, most of the royal wives hid their young children or fled the palace with them. Once the Kourita had been chosen, the Kamsaogho Naba performed a ceremony (similar to those connected with the divine kings of the Near East) during which the youth was given one of his father's horses, dressed in his father's clothes, and given his father's youngest widow as a wife. He was then paid the homage due the Mogho Naba, and after receiving many gifts from the dignitaries, he was banished from Ouagadougou forever. As he went through the country, he was treated like the Mogho Naba and given many wives and presents. If he should chance to return to Ouagadougou or see the new Mogho Naba, either or both of them would be killed by the ancestors. Many Mossi districts seem to have been founded by exiled Kouritadamba. These men were undoubtedly among the numerous "elder" sons of past kings who are said to have "refused" the nam and gone to live in the districts now governed by their descendants. [17] • [43] [634]

The choice and banishment of the Kourita heralded the funeral rites, which were characterized by numerous animal sacrifices to the ancestors in the name of the deceased ruler. On the afternoon of the first day of the funeral, the Crown Prince mounted a horse and left the palace by the women's door. The Napoko then took the bridle of her brother's horse and led him and an immense crowd of cavalry, armed warriors, and musicians around the palace walls three times. After the third round, the Napoko demanded that her brother give her a personal servant as a present; he hesitated, but finally granted her request. The Napoko was then lifted up by the warriors, who shouted as they carried her home. The funeral thus came to an end. [766] [644] [643] [782] [788]

All Mossi potentates tried to emulate the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou in matters of pomp, ceremony, and government. Their courts were inferior to his, but only because they were less powerful and less wealthy. [631] [184] [643] [644]

[Pre-World War II Period]

[P.154]

X

MOSSI GOVERNMENT DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD

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● 171
* 648
IN AN EFFORT to undermine the power of the Mossi chiefs, change the traditional Mossi administration, and incorporate the Mossi territories into the colonial complex, the French attempted to weaken the structure of the Mossi political organization. They tried at first to apply their policy of *assimilation*, which was characterized by direct rule and by "giving the colonies institutions analogous to those of metropolitan France, [which] little by little removes the distances that separate the diverse parts of French territory and finally realizes their intimate union through the application of common legislation."

The French attitude toward the Mossi political organization and its chiefs is clearly defined in the instructions Commander Destenave gave to Captain Scal for the administration of a territory that had not yet been brought completely under French control. Destenave writes:

We have no interest in strengthening the power that is regarded as central, nor in increasing the power of the various Nabas; on the contrary, we must look for points of stress which will permit us to divide the country, and thus preclude any coalitions against us. . . . In so doing, the authority of the Mogho Naba itself will be weakened, because we can easily acknowledge the independence of these great [princes] and free them from his influence. This is an excellent measure from a political standpoint; for we must not lose sight of the fact that we have no interest in strengthening the power of the central authority. On the contrary, we must encourage as much as possible the tendency of the great chiefs (vassals) to break the last bonds that still attach them to Ouagadougou. This is the course which has been followed by the Resident Officer. It has produced excellent results, and the requested taxes have come in regularly. In future, we should seize every opportunity to weaken the authority of these vassals by declaring the independence of the villages under their command. Just recently, the chiefs of Coundiri and Tema were removed from under the command of the Yako chief, and are now under the direct command of the Resident.³

At first the Mossi resisted all changes in their political organization and all demands for foodstuffs, information about their territories, and labors.³

CHAPTER THREE

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1. Dim Delobson, pp. 8-9.

2. Crozat, p. 4849.

[802] 3. *Ibid.* The Mossi always use multiples of three in connection with masculine affairs.

4. Archives, Document 15G-190 (1897-98, Haute Volta).

5. Dim Delobson, p. 37. The difficulty here is caused by the Mossi words and their meanings. For example, the words for "God" are Ouennam and Ouende. The words for "sun" are the same. The ethnologists can speculate about whether the Mossi once worshiped the sun or whether a high god has evolved into a supreme deity. But the Mossi do not agree that their use of the same words for God and for the sun implies that they believe God is the sun, or that the sun is their God. It should be pointed out *inter alia* that many African peoples are not awed by their gods and grant them human feelings and attributes. The Mossi regard their supreme being Ouennam as an otiose deity who is not too concerned with human affairs. It is the ancestors who provide the sanctions for good conduct.

[171]

6. It seems certain that Ibn Battuta saw a similar salutation in Mali: "The Negroes are of all people the most submissive to their king, and the most abject in their behavior before him. They swear by his name, saying *Manza Souliman ki* [the Emperor Souliman has commanded]. If he summons any of them while he is holding an audience in his pavilion, the person summoned takes off his clothes and puts on worn garments, removes his turban and dons a dirty skullcap, and enters with his garments and trousers raised knee-high. He goes forward in an attitude of humility and dejection, and knocks the ground hard with his elbows, then stands with bowed head and bent back, listening to what he says. If anyone addresses the king and receives a reply from him, he uncovers his back and throws dust over his head and back, for all the world like a bather splashing himself with water. I used to wonder how it was that they did not blind themselves" (Gibb, p. 327; cf. Mangin, p. 15).

Obviously, Ibn Battuta found this salutation distasteful. Most Europeans feel the same way about the Mossi salute. If a Moaga visited England, he might be equally struck by the sight of a great soldier or statesman kneeling before a woman ruler and being touched on the shoulder with a sword.

[171]

7. It is interesting to compare this account with Ibn Battuta's description of Mansa Souliman, king of Mali: "On certain days the sultan holds audiences in the palace yard, where there is a platform under a tree, with three steps; this they call the *pempi*. . . . The sultan comes out of a door in the corner of the palace, carrying a bow in his hand and a quiver on his back. On his head he has a golden skullcap bound with a gold band which has narrow ends shaped like knives, more than a span in length. His usual dress is a velvety red tunic, made of the European fabric called *mutanjas*. The sultan is preceded by his musicians, who carry gold and silver guimbris (two-stringed guitars), and behind him come three hundred armed slaves. He walks in a leisurely fashion, affecting a very slow movement, and even stops from time to time. On reaching the *pempi*, he stops and looks round the assembly, then ascends it in the sedate manner of a preacher ascending a mosque pulpit. As he takes his seat, the drums, trumpets, and bugles are sounded" (Gibb, p. 326).

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8. It is possible that the Mossi either borrowed this tradition from Mali or shared part of the Mali king complex, for Ibn Battuta reports that a similar rite was held in Mali during the fourteenth century. He says that when the ruler entered the pavilion for the morning ceremony, "two saddled and bridled horses are brought, along with two goats, which they hold to serve as a protection against the evil eye" (Gibb, p. 326).

9. In Dim Delobson's account (p. 60), an unnamed wife of the Mogho Naba ran away, and he allegedly tried to follow her because she was the only person in his household who knew how to cook his favorite food. 000

It is interesting that the Mossi have a tradition in which their ruler undergoes the same experience as many a Mossi husband, namely, being betrayed by his wife. It is also interesting that Mogho Naba Waraga is the ruler named in this incident. He is the ruler who waged a five-year-long civil war with one of his vassals. It may well be that his ministers devised the myth about his wife in order to prevent him from leaving the capital to fight. [837]

10. The Mossi practice of tasting food before giving it to another person is obviously connected with the fear of poison. The Mossi believe that only a boorish person would give another person something to eat without first tasting it himself. [576]

11. The full significance of this ceremony is unclear, for the Mossi hesitate to talk about it. It is known that the "sacred fire" is linked to the nocturnal visits of the royal ancestors. But the relationship of the fire to another sacred fire kept in Koubri district (about seventeen miles from Ouagadougou) is not known. [372]

Faithful to Mossi tradition or ignorant of the true nature of the ceremony, Dim Delobson says nothing about the ceremony and does not mention the presence of the namtibo. However, he does report that the palace guards would kill anyone who approached the place where the rite was being performed (p. 62). [114]

12. There are several traditions concerning female regents. However, I believe that they may have their basis in the role the Mogho Naba's daughter played during the interregnum.

13. Mossi genealogies show that only in one case in which the nam passed from a Mogho Naba to his brother did the former Mogho Naba's sons receive districts from their uncle, the new ruler. Since it is difficult to believe that the eleven other Mogho Nanamse who were succeeded by their brothers died without issue, it can only be concluded that the descendants of a ruler who did not inherit the nam were ignored by their uncles in power.

14. To this council could be added other men whose experience was valued. For example, the Baloum Naba was called upon in 1942 to give advice about a successor to Kom.

15. Dim Delobson, pp. 130-32.

16. It is interesting that the sheepskin garb of the Mossi pretenders is similar to the dress of the chiefs among the smaller tribal groups of the Voltaic culture area. If we can assume that culture traits characteristic of ritual and ceremonial practices tend to persist longer than most other traits, we might have evidence that the complex Mossi state evolved from the political organizations found among the smaller local groups. [177] ● [174]

17. The "naming of a name" speech is part of most Mossi *rites de passage*, and is often used to brag about some achievement or to cast aspersions on one's enemies. Most newly elected monarchs pledge good government, brag about their elevation, and vilify their enemies.

In his inaugural speech Naba Kom II said, "When plenty of water falls during the rainy season, the rivers and seas are glad because they are enlarged." "Kom" means "water," and Kom's speech meant that he pledged to bring happiness to all his subjects.

Boukary Koutou insulted his listeners by declaring, "Even if a hundred ghosts join together, they cannot harm an elephant." He was called Mogho Naba Wobogo ("elephant").

18. It is said that if the amulets were stolen during the interregnum, the thief had to be elected Mogho Naba; if they were stolen afterwards, the ruler lost the basis for the mystical quality of leadership and authority he had inherited from his ancestors.

9. Trade and Markets Among the Mossi People

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larger markets there were and are solid stalls which are built and tenanted by merchants. In the small district and village markets, these stalls are built out of millet stalks which offer little but protection against the noonday sun on market days. Men build these structures for their womenfolk and for themselves. Some of the shelters which are not used for trading serve as galleries where the young blades look out and comment on the passing scene. Others are used as meeting places by adult men who sit and discuss all sorts of affairs. Still others are used by the older men, who gather there to arrange marriages between their several families, wait for gifts from younger men who seek wives, or spend a great deal of time reminiscing about their youthful adventures. Those persons who do not have such shelters sit in the sun or use grass lean-tos as protection from the sun.

Except in the large towns, Mossi markets are held between the hours of 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. every fourth day. In the larger towns there are daily markets, but these remained unimportant until today when they serve a growing urban population. The capital city of Wagadougou now even has an "evening" market which opens about 4:00 P.M. and closes at about 9:00 P.M. In addition, numerous daily markets have sprung up in many of its wards. The three-day markets are, however, the traditional type, and they are still the most numerous through the country. By "three-day market" I mean that a market is held one day, not held over the two following days, and then held again on the next day. These markets also have a 21-day cycle from one *Ragakasanga* or *Rag'kasanga* ("larger market") on a Friday to another *Rag'kasanga* on a Friday three weeks later, a total of seven markets between the two important ones. The people give no adequate explanation for the observance of the three-day cycle or the 21-day cycle. One man did suggest that it took the women three days to prepare beer and this was why markets could not be held more often, but even he did not speculate about the 21-day cycle.¹⁰ This same man did point out, however, that the cycle made little difference to persons who really liked to go to market, since it was possible for

(10) Zahan (1954 : 373) apparently found one of the few Mossi informants with a mystical bent; he reports that the seven three-day cycles of markets in the 21-day cycle have the following significance for the Yatenga people: "The first of these numbers explains the cycle of the person (7 symbolizes the complete person: male [to which the Mossi assign the number 3] and female [to which they assign the number 4], the second that of the creation." He believes that each market starts a new cycle, a beginning and an end: "the seventh market signifies the most perfect equilibrium: the one which exists between the universe, mankind, and the divinity." In a footnote he suggests that this symbolism is not too different among the Dogon, who are "ideologically and geographically close to the Mossi." Peter Hammond, who worked in Yatenga, could find this kind of symbolism.